

PARABLE OF THE LIFE-SAVING STATION

(The following is directly quoted from Rev. T.O. Wedel, Warden, College of Preachers, Washington Cathedral, Washington, D.C.)

(This is a very good illustration of what has happened to our churches and I am sure that the Rev. T.O. Wedel would be pleased to have this "parable" of his shared with preachers around the world. Therefore I am passing this on to all who might visit this web site and find this item of Rev. Wedel's as useful as I did.)

Parable of the Life-Saving Station

"On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves they went out day or night tirelessly searching for the lost. Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding area, wanted to associate and give their time and money. New boats were brought and new crews were trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

Some of the new members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided at the first refuge of those saved from the sea. So they replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely. Fewer members were now interested in going on lifesaving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews. The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the club decoration and there was a liturgical lifesaving boat in the meeting room. About this time, a large ship was wrecked off the coast and the hired crews brought in boatloads of cold, wet, and half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick and some of them had yellow skin. The beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted upon lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a lifesaving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another lifesaving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown!"

(Take a look at the churches of today, look around, see the "shipwrecked" people drowning in the "sea." Who is sending "lifeboats" out to rescue them? Is YOUR church a club or a lifesaving station?)